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Taliban has hoisted its flag on Hazrat Ali mosque of Mazar I Sharif.

This mosque is especially venerated by Shia Hazaras of Afghanistan.

This development is of extreme significance in the light of history and has implications on the very definition of Afghanistan

Thread.



شاهرود  
Shahr-e-wend  
رادیو و تلویزیون شاهرود

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The Afghanistan we see on the map today was created by Afghan King Emir Abdur Rahman in 1900.

Before 1880, the entire central region of Afghanistan constituted a different country that was known by the name Hazaristan or Hazarajat

It was NOT considered a part of Afghanistan



That Afghanistan is nation of Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, etc is just a modern notion created 50 years ago.

Consider this Afghan idiom of the famous Pashtun poet Khushal Khattak(c. 1613 -1689 CE)

"An Afghan is a Pashtun and a Pashtun is an Afghan. Behead him who says otherwise"

Who are Hazaras?

Hazaras are considered by historians to be descendants of Genghis Khan's army.

This is supported by their Asiatic features.

Although a majority of Hazaras adopted Persian with their own Hazaragi dialect, some still speak a Turkic language known as "Moghul"





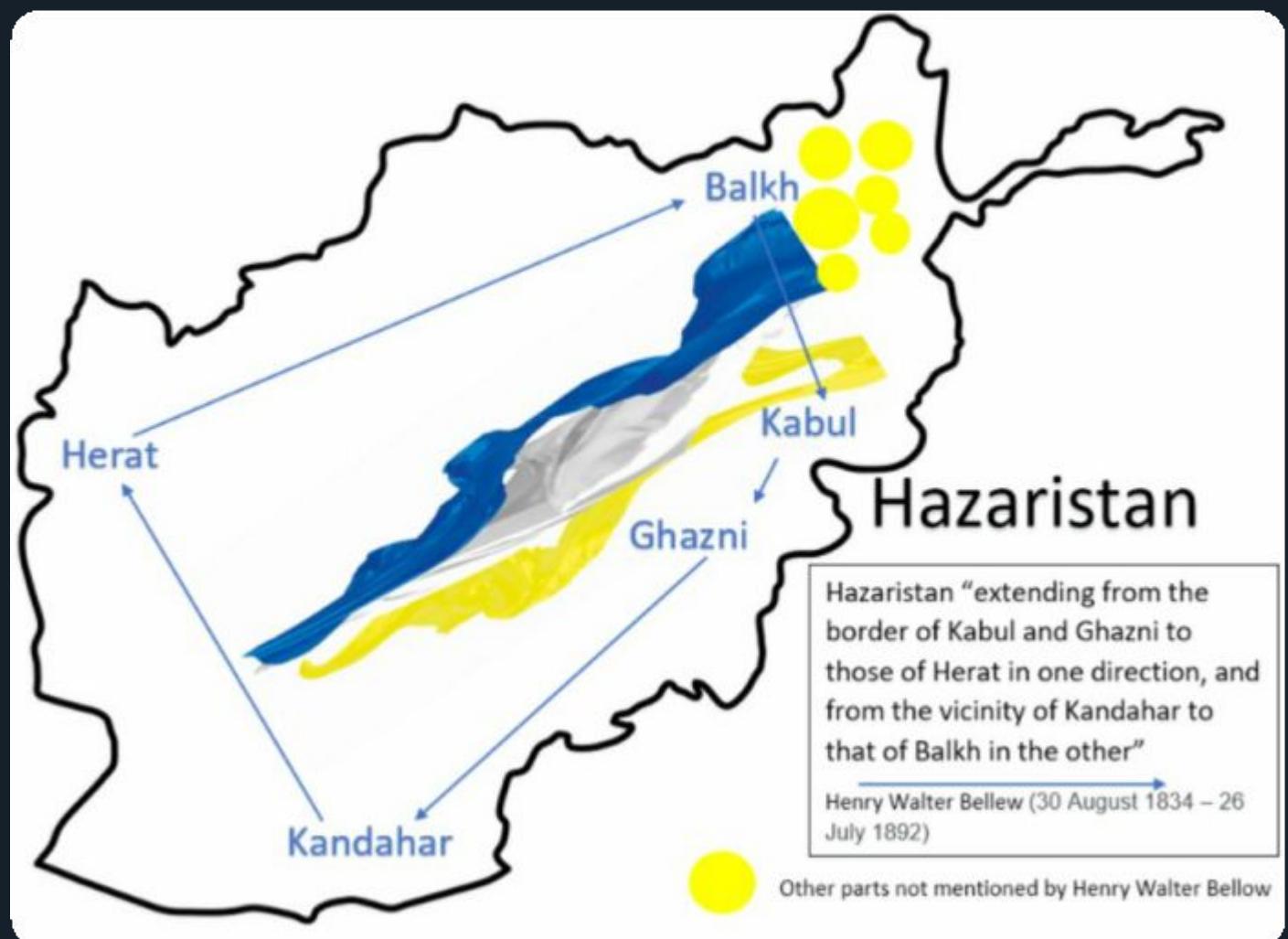
Kim Lau @crosoadz



An overwhelming majority of Hazaras are Shia by faith, in contrast to their Sunni Pashtun neighbors.

Hazaras are distinct from other Afghans linguistically, culturally and ethnically.

Traditionally, they inhabited the entire central region of Afghanistan from Ghazni to Herat



That Hazaras were distinct nation from Afghans is attested by Abul Fazl (c.16th century)

Abul Fazl says- " Hazaras are the descendants of the army sent by Manku Khan(Grandson of Genghis Khan).

Hazaristan spans from Ghazni to Qandahar and from Maidan to Balkh"

Ain I Akbari I.591

According to US Dept of state, Hazaras today constitute 15% of Afghanistan's population.

However, these figures were disputed by Hazaras themselves who claimed that they were 25%.

The UN Bonn conference (2001) estimated Hazara population at 19%.

| Years | Shias and Hazaras Demographic Estimation (US Dept of State) |
|-------|---|
| 2011  | 19%   |
| 2012  | 19%   |
| 2013  | 19%   |
| 2014  | 19%   |
| 2015  | 10-15%  |
| 2016  | 20-25%  |
| 2017  | 20-25%  |
| 2018  | 10-15%  |
| 2019  | 10-15%  |

US State Department's annual Reports on International Religious Freedom: Afghanistan (2011-2019)

| Ethnic Groups   | percentage | in millions        |
|---|------------|--------------------|
| Total Population  | 100        | 26.8 <sup>34</sup> |
| Pashtuns  | 38         | 10.1               |
| Tajiks  | 25         | 6.7                |
| Hazaras   | 19         | 5.1                |
| Uzbeks  | 6          | 1.6                |
| Minor ethnic groups<br>(Aimaks, Turkmen, Baloch and others) | 12         | 3.2 <sup>35</sup>  |

\* Contributing percentage of the total population

Until 1880, Hazaras formed 67% of the population of today's Afghanistan region.

Except for a few Hazara tribes residing in the vicinity of Kabul & Kandahar who paid annual tribute, the Hazaras were independent and NOT under the control of Pashtun (Barakzai) rulers of Afghanistan

Hazaras subsisted on cattle breeding. Made their living by taxing (& raiding) Silk Route caravans from India to Central Asia passing through Bamiyan.

They were independent & divided into several tribes . An exceptional Hazara chief named Mir Yazdan Baksh(c.1800 CE) united them



میرزا دنخش ہبودؑ مخالف یا لئی و جانب در حوق مردم

The rising Hazara power under Mir Yazdan Baksh could not be tolerated by Afghan king Dost Mohammad Khan.

Khan invited Hazara chief to Kabul under pretext of friendship. He assured safety under Qur'an oath.

In Kabul, the unsuspecting Hazara chief was arrested at first opportunity



Yazdan Hazara had a prudent wife who had cautioned him about treachery of Afghan Khan.

But as hubbie wouldn't relent, she had also come with him.

Afghan king decided to kill them. But by taking advantage of king's avarice & making false promise of tribute, they heroically escaped

COUNSEL OF THE MIR'S LADY.

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esteem, and desired to establish a personal acquaintance with him ; and he requested them to employ their influence to induce the chief to visit Kâbal. They made communications to Mîr Yezdân-baksh ; and Dost Mâhomed Khân forwarded to him a Korân, with his seal affixed, as a solemn pledge for his safety ; for which also the principals of the Shîas, at the Kâbal chief's suggestion, became guarantees. Mîr Yezdân-baksh, who had not hitherto come into collision with the Afghâns, apprehending no hostility from one to whom he had given no cause for enmity, decided to visit Dost Mâhomed Khân, calculating on making arrangements relative to Bísút which might be mutually beneficial. One of his wives (a daughter

of a Deh Zanghī chief) alone cautioned him not to repair to Kâbal. This lady, of masculine understanding and habits, was accustomed, arrayed in male attire, well armed and mounted, to accompany her lord in his expeditions; she fought by his side in the field, and out of it assisted him in his councils. It was usual with her, on every occasion, to recommend to the mîr never to place himself in the power of the Afghâns. The Hazâra mîr, on this occasion, listened not to her advice; and she, unable to dissuade him from his purpose, evinced her fidelity by accompanying him, although her mind foreboded every disaster. The pair, arrived at Kâbal, were courteously received by Dost Mâhomed Khân; but, on the first favourable op-

portunity, Mír Yezdânbaksh was seized and confined a prisoner, as was his wife. The Afghân chief would immediately have slain his captive; but the latter, aware of Afghân cupidity, intimated his willingness to pay fifty thousand rupees for his ransom, provided he was released immediately, that he might repair to Kârzár and collect it, the Júânsírs of Kâbal becoming bondsmen for its due payment. Dost Máhomed Khân, remarkably needy, without any design of sparing the Hazára chief, was nevertheless anxious, by some fraud or other, to obtain his property, and therefore rescinded the orders for immediate execution, that he might concert measures for so doing. While these were in agitation, Mír Yezdânbaksh found means to escape, and reached Bísút. Exasperated at the escape of his intended victim, Dost Máhomed Khân, in the first transports of his rage, resolved to immolate his wife, and ordered her to be brought before him, when he reviled her in opprobrious terms. The Hazára Amazon exclaimed, "Oh, son of Pâhînda Khân, art thou not ashamed to array thyself against a female?" It is said, that the Afghân chief was abashed, and hung down his head. There were not wanting men of influence amongst the Afghâns, who, admiring the woman's magnanimity, deprecated any species of violence being offered to her; and Dost Máhomed Khân himself, perhaps recovering his reason,

consented that she should be placed in custody of the Kazzilbâshes, who would treat her with more kindness than Afghâns. She was accordingly conveyed to Chândol, whence, in a short time, she also fled, attired as a male, and well armed and mounted, her escape probably favoured or connived at by her gaolers. On her flight becoming known to Dost Mâhomèd Khân, he despatched a small party of horse in pursuit of her, and these came up with her in the valley of Honai, immediately before entering the Hazâra territory. Finding herself overtaken, she turned about and presented her matchlock, and, by alternately advancing and halting, keeping her pursuers at bay, she gained the kotal, or pass of Honai, which being Hazâra soil, pursuit was abandoned. The lady's good fortune was principally owing, of course, to the indecision of her pursuers; they had proceeded with sufficient alacrity in chase, but, on reaching the object of it, as men and soldiers, felt perplexed how to secure it, and ashamed to attack a female. The heroine joined her husband at Kârzâr, to his great satisfaction. She has since paid the debt of nature.

Mîr Yezdân-baksh had no sooner regained his liberty than he applied himself with unwearied assiduity to the extension of his power among the Hazâras. Although his sentiments towards the

This was an early Afghan attempt to subdue Hazaras.

However, Hazaras subjugation was carried to completion by an Afghan king named Abdur Rahman khan in 1888 CE.

He was a Sunni extremist who believed in complete extérmination of shias & non muzlims through ghastly punishments

The torture of criminals and so-called ‘infidels’ was commonplace, and very sophisticated. According to Ghobar:

In order to take confession from one soldier, he [Abdur Rahman] ordered the soldier to be hung from a tree for three days and nights, during which time he was put through all sorts of torture. One of the methods used was the following: the top half of his head was covered with a dough shaped bowl and boiling oil poured into it. This was done until the hot oil pierced through and the soldier lost consciousness; the only sign of life was seen as he blinked his blood and insect covered eyelids, until he eventually died. (Ghobar, 1980: 653–4)

In 1888, Abdur Rahman called for his first invasion against Hazara country.

He called for a Jihád and told the Pashtun tribes "heads will be mine and the property will be yours".

He jailed Hazara tribal leaders. A few Hazaras revolted but their rebellion was brutally crushed

In the time of Shir Ali Khan (1863–80) these Hazara people were controlled by their own Mirs, and they taxed the people, and took also some salaries from the government. When Abdur Rahman Khan came from Bokhara (1880) and beat Shir Ali Khan, and took the Kabul kingdom, the Hazara Mirs were for Shir Ali, and therefore made a huge rebellion against Abdur Rahman Khan . . . at that time Abdur Rahman Khan spoke with the Mohmand and the Ahmadzai tribes and asked them to fight the Hazaras: 'Heads will be mine, and all property will be yours!' Then big fights started between the Hazaras and the Pashtuns (Afghans), and at last the Pashtuns were victorious and captured Behsud, Day Zangi, Day Kund and Shahristan, etc., and all the Hazaras from these areas were either killed or forced to leave. (1962: 128)

It was Abdur Rahman Khan who first conquered almost all of the Hazara tribes.

Between 1880-1891, he brought 60% of Hazara tribes under control.

During the years 1880–91, Abdur Rahman succeeded in subjugating new areas of the Hazarajat, inhabited by over fifty different Hazara clans, such as: Orazgan, Sultan Ahmad, Loti, Haidar, Mir Qadam, Daya, Fuladi, Dankah, Haji, Qarliq, Muhammad Dabah, Nihal, Basi, Daulat Khan, Nik Muhammad, Aziz, Aska, Taghlog, Temoor, Qutina, Khiyal, Chopanak, Mir Qoli, Daroo, Barlas, Panjpa, Mir Adinah, Shadi, Tajik, Nor Big, Haji Khan, Khordak Zaida, Mliki, Moridi, Makanak, Gholam, Zavoli [Zabuli], Morad, Enayat Khan, Se Pai, and Khoshnoo (Temirkhanov, 1980: 116).

The whole of the Hazarajat was inhabited by approximately 500,000 families, of which some 300,000 were under control of government rule. (1913: 73)

The Afghan conquest of Hazaristan was extremely brutal.

They used to marry Hazara women by force.

Hazaras were forced to utter abuses at Imam Ali(venerated by Shias)

Hazaras were subjected to extremely brutal punishments like burning genitáls with fire.

Exorbitant taxes

Afghan officers and commanders, headed by Abdul Qodos Khan, married daughters of Hazara leaders by force, each taking more than one wife, and generally spent their time drunk and enjoying themselves. (Faiz, 1333, 1912, Vol. 3: 740, 745, 761)

Government soldiers were free to fine people as they pleased, or to capture and torture men under the pretext of disarming them. Orazgani gives numerous accounts of the different torture methods used; here I shall include but a few. Farhad Khan, one of Abdur Rahman's commanders on one occasion slew six people and then hanged their bodies from a tree; on another occasion he tied four people up and had them dragged by their horses until their flesh had begun falling off. On yet another occasion, two Hazaras were told to utter curses to Imam Ali (the fourth Muslim caliph and first Shi'a Imam); when they refused to do so they were thrown in front of a pack of hungry dogs to be devoured. A heated stone, red as fire, was thrown inside a man's shirt while his hands and legs were tied up; or a cat would be placed inside a man's trousers and kicked and beaten until the animal would become fierce and scratch and rip the man's legs and genitals (Orazgani, 1913: 79–80).

Hazaras tolerated everything for a while.

One day, 33 Afghan soldiers raped the wife of a Hazara in front of him.

The Hazaras, preferring death to dishonor, decided it was enough & killed Afghan soldiers.

Other Hazaras also joined and this snowballed into a major rebellion

Thousands of documents can be produced and hundreds of pages written, on the inhuman policies and activities of Abdur Rahman. The aim of giving these examples here is to provide a background to the period preceding the uprisings. It was the culmination of these conditions that provided the basis for the major uprising by the Hazaras. The actual trigger for the first rebellion was the assault by thirty-three Afghan soldiers on the wife of a Pahlawan Hazara. The soldiers, who had entered the house under the pretext of searching for arms, tied the man up and assaulted his wife in front of him. The families of both the man and his wife, deciding that death was one

hundred times better than such humiliation, killed the soldiers involved and attacked the local garrison, from whence they recovered their confiscated arms.

Thus the major Hazara uprising of April 1892 began in the occupied Hazarajat. Interestingly, the rebellion first began in parts of the Hazarajat where the Amir had enjoyed much support. Following the success of the above-mentioned attack on government forces, the Orazgani Hazaras also took arms and joined the uprising. Of all the Afghan forces in the area, only Mohammadullah Khan and his men were able to flee and defend themselves. As the uprising spread and neared Kabul, the rebels were joined by Kabuli Hazaras and even some dissatisfied government officials.

In response, Afghan king Abdur Rahman assembled Sunni religious leaders and declared a Jihád on "godless Shias".

He promised Hazara land, Hazara wealth and children as rewards of war

All Afghan tribes united under the Jihád

The Hazara revolt was brutally crushed

It was at this point that Abdur Rahman became aware of the extent and seriousness of the uprising, and called upon Sunni religious leaders to conduct a 'religious crusade' against the 'godless' Shi'a Hazaras, promising those who took part in the crusade, Hazara land, wealth, women and children as reward. An enormous force was put together: some 30,000–40,000 government troops, 10,000 mounted government troops, and some 100,000 civilians (Faiz, 1333, 1912, Vol. 3: 781–2, 809, 812; Sultan 1980, Vol. 1: 283). Also volunteering to join the crusade were Afghan nomads who had long pleaded with the Amir to fight the Hazaras (Sultan 1980, Vol. 1: 283). A state of emergency was declared in all cities. Even the British government offered the assistance of British military advisers to Abdur Rahman (Temirkhanov, 1980: 143).

After the crushing defeat of Hazaras, they were enslaved.

Hazara slaves became so cheap in Kabul that they could be brought for 10 seers of wheat.

Hazaristan became part of Afghanistan

Following this success, exorbitant taxes, and general oppression were once again the rule in Hazarajat. Added to this, the area became a centre for the slave trade, and for the first time, the government introduced special taxes for slave trading. Hazara slaves were being offered so cheaply, that a slave could be bought for 10 seers of wheat or barley (Faiz, 1333, 1912 Vol. 3: 863). Furthermore, the inability to pay exorbitant government fines and taxes soon forced many Hazaras to sell their own wives and children as slaves (ibid.: 855).

Many refractory Hazara were forcibly deported from Hazaristan.

They were sold as slaves in Kabuli. Today's Kabuli Hazaras are their descendants.

Hazaras could not bear the oppression. Many tribes migrated to British India(Quetta) where they form a large diaspora even today

According to Temirkhanov, after the end of the war, the Hazaras divided into three groups:

- 1 *Mirs* who accepted the conditions of the Amir of Kabul, numbering some 10,000 families.
- 2 Hazaras who had no faith in the Amir's promises and did not trust him, but who were not strong enough to resist. These numbered some 15,000 families, and they chose to migrate to neighbouring countries, such as Iran and British India (Pakistan today).
- 3 Hazaras who neither trusted the Amir nor wanted to leave and so carried on their resistance to the Amir (ibid.: 167).

Some Hazaras were forced to embrace Sunni faith. Sunni mosques were built in Hazaristan.

To counter Hazara numerical strength, Pashtun tribes were settled in Hazaristan. Hazara land was seized and given to Pashtun settlers. Many Hazaras migrated to Iran to escape persecution

The term *Mir* was gradually completely abandoned and replaced by *Arbab* and *Malik*, still in fairly current use in the Hazarajat. The religious leadership and hierarchy, previously headed by Millas and Sayyeds, was also transformed, with the majority sent into exile in distant parts of the country. Measures were also taken to actually replace the religious significance of the Shia leadership and faith among the Hazaras, and to impose on them Sunni Islam in its stead. In the locality of the Day Zangi Hazaras, several *Hanafi* (one of four branches of Sunni Islam) mosques were built and led by Qazi Abdul Qayom, while the Hazaras were forced to embrace Hanafi beliefs (Faiz, 1333, 1912, Vol. 3: 1065).

Hazaras were banned from owning houses or weapons. Blood tax was imposed on Hazaras.

Arable areas of Hazaristan were depopulated of Hazaras and given over to Pashtun nomads.

More than half of Hazara population was killed or forced out

Hazara industry was also badly destroyed. Several industrial trades were completely abandoned, such as ironmongery. The Hazaras were banned even from owning horses and owning or making weapons. (1980: 180)

(f) A further tax was the 'blood tax' (*maliyat-e khun*). In 1898, the government planned to recruit a battalion of Hazara soldiers, later increased to eight battalions, made up of Hazara soldiers and Afghan officers. Each was to number 100 troops. In 1900, a plan was laid down to choose one soldier out of every eight Hazaras to serve in the regular army. The responsibility and expense of arming and paying for the chosen man lay with the other seven; they were to pay the government 600 *qerans* for his weapons and 192 *qerans* annually for his expenses, for three years. If for some reason (death, for instance) the chosen soldier was unable to complete his service another was to be chosen to replace him. The sum of money spent on the requirements, as well as actually serving in the army, were referred to as 'blood tax' (Temirkhanov, 1980: 183–4). In cases of failure to pay all taxes due, the wife and children of the failing Hazara were sold as slaves, an action legalised by Abdur Rahman in March 1894.

One of the fundamental consequences of the failed uprisings was the significant change in the physical structure and human geography of the Hazarajat. According to Temirkhanov, until the end of the 19th century, there were no considerable Hazara communities in Afghanistan's neighbouring countries (1980: 190). In other words, until that time the Hazaras inhabited the areas only of central Afghanistan known as the Hazarajat. This area, shown fairly accurately on maps in earlier sections, covered the northern and southern plains of the Hindu Kush and Baba mountains, and measured more than three times the area of today's Hazarajat. The extent of the destruction wrought by Abdur Rahman against the Hazaras can easily be seen in this enormous geographic reduction. Much land was taken from the Hazaras and given as booty to Pashtun nomads. Some of the most arable areas such as Orozgan, Ajaristan, Chorah and Dehrawood, were completely depopulated of Hazaras and taken over by Afghan nomads. Similar depopulation took place in the north. The Hazaras exiled from these areas were forced to flee to neighbouring countries, where they lay the foundations for pockets of Hazara populations outside of Afghanistan.

In the opinion of the present writer, the reduction in the population of the Hazara peoples was the most significant intention of Abdur Rahman's anti-Hazara campaign. Although it is impossible to arrive at the exact number of Hazaras killed or forced into exile during these years, it is clearly documented that more than half of the Hazara population was destroyed or forced out. Of the tribes mostly destroyed (some 90 per cent destroyed) were the: Day Chopan, Daya, Pulad (Fuladi), Ajristan, Chorah, Orazgan, Zavoli (Zabuli), Pahlawan, Bobash, Bobak, Sultan Ahmad, Shooi, Shirah and Minishin. A similar fate befell the Tala and Barfak, Goori and Kabuli Hazaras (Temirkhanov, 1980: 152, 174-5, 190). Others seriously reduced were Shaikh Ali, Turkman, Day Kundi, Qarabagh, Jaghouri and Yakau Lang. In a report sent to Abdur Rahman from one of his officials in Yakau Lang in (1894) it is written that:

Hazara women were made sex slaves. Some women preferred death over dishonor.

In one incident in 1893, 47 Hazara women jumped off the cliff to avoid capture at the hands of Sunni Afghan soldiers.

This incident has been in the Hazara memory and these women are honored even today



Hence, in Persian language, there is a saying

"Sag e Afghan kas Dara adam e Hazarah nah"

"Even a dog of Pashtuns has a protector but a Hazara does not

Similarly, the Hazaras were completely defenceless in the face of regular *Kuchi* (Pashtun nomad) encroachment on their lands, which were used by the nomads for grazing their animals; past experience had proven that the *Kuchis* were never prosecuted or chastised, for they enjoyed the support of the Kabul regime (ibid.: 28). Perhaps it is for this reason that the following expression has become quite common among Hazaras: '*sag-e Aughu kas dara, adam-e Azrah nah*' (even a Pashtun dog has a protector, but not a Hazara).

A bridge in Kabul has the name "Pul e Yak Piasagi"  
"The bridge of one paisa"

This was because at this place Hazara slaves were sold at one paisa.

Among Hazaras from various regions, such as Behsud, Bamiyan, Jaghouri and even Pakistan, a story is told that the bridge in Kabul, known today as *Pul-e Nadir Khan*, was previously called *Pol-e Yak Paisagi*, because during the 1890s, Hazara Mirs were sold at 1 *paisa* a head (100 *paisa* = 1 Kabuli rupee), and the money spent on building the bridge. This is but another anecdote, whether true or false is unimportant, which reflects the social and economic impoverishment of the Hazaras.

Until 1970, Sunni Pashtun Mullahs declared that killing a Hazara secures Allāh's favor.

This was not just mere rhetoric. One Latif Ghul raped and killed 40 Hazaras.

Later he confessed several Mullahs told him that "pious acts" like Hazara killing absolved his previous sins

Until the 1970s, the killing of Hazaras was declared by Sunni Pashtun clerics as an accepted and sanctified means of gaining God's favour and securing for oneself a place in Heaven. This declaration was taken to heart by many Sunni extremists. Perhaps the worst example of this during more recent years was the story of Latif Ghul, arrested in Kabul for the sexual assault and murder of some forty Hazaras in the

1960s. According to newspaper reports of the time, Latif Ghul, an ex-wrestler and a Sunni, would lure newly arrived Hazaras to the outskirts of Kabul with the promise of jobs, where he would tie them up, assault and then murder them. Once arrested, in his confession he named several mullas who had sanctified and blessed these murders, saying they had told him that with every Hazara he killed yet another of his sins would be absolved. The story of Latif Ghul shook Kabul, but while he was prosecuted, found guilty, and executed, no effort was made by the regime at the time to pursue and bring to justice those mullas, and doubtless many others, responsible for such tragedies.

It is against this background that Taliban offensive against Hazaras has to be understood.

"Hazaras are not Muslim, they are Shia. They are kuffar"

—Mullah Manan Niazi, Taliban Governor.

No wonder, then, that Hazaras have been a target in Pakistan and Afghanistan even today



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